

REMARKS

Claims 33-52 are pending. Claims 1 to 32 are currently canceled. Claims 39 to 52 have been withdrawn from consideration. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 33-38 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gray, III et al. (USPN 4,435,461) in view of Mikami et al (USPN 6,524,675). In support of this rejection, it is argued in the Office Action that Gray, III et al. disclose a structured paper release liner like that recited in claim 33, which has a release side free of a “structural support layer”. It is respectfully submitted that the Office Action mischaracterizes the structure of the release liner taught by Gray, III et al..

Contrary to the position taken in the Office Action, the release side of the Gray, III et al. structured paper release liner does include a “structural support layer” as that term is expressly defined in the present application in paragraph [0008]. In particular, a structural support layer is defined as: (a) a continuous plastic layer or coating that is capable of having a structured pattern plastically formed therein, (b) where the pattern is either completely contained within the layer of plastic or the plastic layer is thin enough that the pattern is at least partially formed in the paper core as well as the layer of plastic, and (c) the layer of plastic could be separated from, or produced separately from, the paper core in one piece. In reviewing the Gray, III et al. disclosure, it is clear from the following analysis that the cured coating used in the Gray, III et al. release liner is a “structural support layer” as defined in the subject application.

In particular, regarding elements (a) and (b) of the above definition, Gray, III et al. teaches to use polymer resins capable of being cured with electron beam radiation. Coatings made with such cured resins will form a plastic layer. In addition, Gray, III et al. expressly state, in column 4, lines 2-5:

One of the most important advantages of the invention is that the texture, embossure or other finish of the replicative surface is essentially one hundred percent reproduced in the cured coating (Emphasis Added)

As noted in the Office Action, Gray, III et al. teach that their replicated pattern can be formed in their cured coating and also in the paper backing of their release liner. The Office Action uses this teaching to support the argument that the Gray, III et al. release liner does not include a structural support layer. However, the above definition states that a “structural support layer” can be “thin enough that the pattern is at least partially formed in the paper core as well as the layer of plastic”. Therefore, this embodiment of the Gray, III et al. release liner could still include a structural support layer.

Finally, express teachings of Gray, III et al. indicate that their cured coating is a “layer of plastic [that] could be separated from, or produced separately from, the paper core in one piece” (i.e., element (c) of the above recited definition). For example, Gray, III et al. teach to e-beam cure their resin coating twice, with the replicated surface of their coating being directly exposed to the second dose of e-beam radiation (i.e., to fully cure the resin coating). In addition, Gray, III et al. teach that their resin coating is provided as a “continuous layer” on the paper substrate with a basis weight that “will typically range from about 22.2 grams to about 44.4 grams per square meter” (column 5, lines 59-63). A polyester coating resin, which is one of the typical coating resins taught by Gray, III et al. (see column 6, line 31), has a density of about 1.4 g/cm^3 . With this density, the disclosed basis weight is equivalent to a thickness range of from about 16 micrometers to about 32 micrometer. Such a plastic layer could be produced separately from the paper core in one piece.

Therefore, the layer of cured plastic coated onto the Gray, III et al. paper substrate is a structural support layer, as that term is expressly defined in the subject patent application. It should be noted that claim 33 previously recited the definition of a structural support layer, but the definition was removed from claim 33 as a result of the Examiner Interview on June 2, 2010.

Because the release side of the Gray, III et al. release liner includes a “structural support layer” as that term is expressly defined in the present application, the combination of references cited in this Office Action do not disclose, teach or suggest each and every element recited in the present claim 33. As a result, the Office Action fails to present a prima facie case against the

patentability of claims 33. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 33-38 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Request for Rejoinder

Withdrawn claims 39-52 incorporate all the claim features of patentable claim 33. Accordingly, it is submitted that they are likewise patentable. Rejoinder of these claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Examination and reconsideration of the application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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